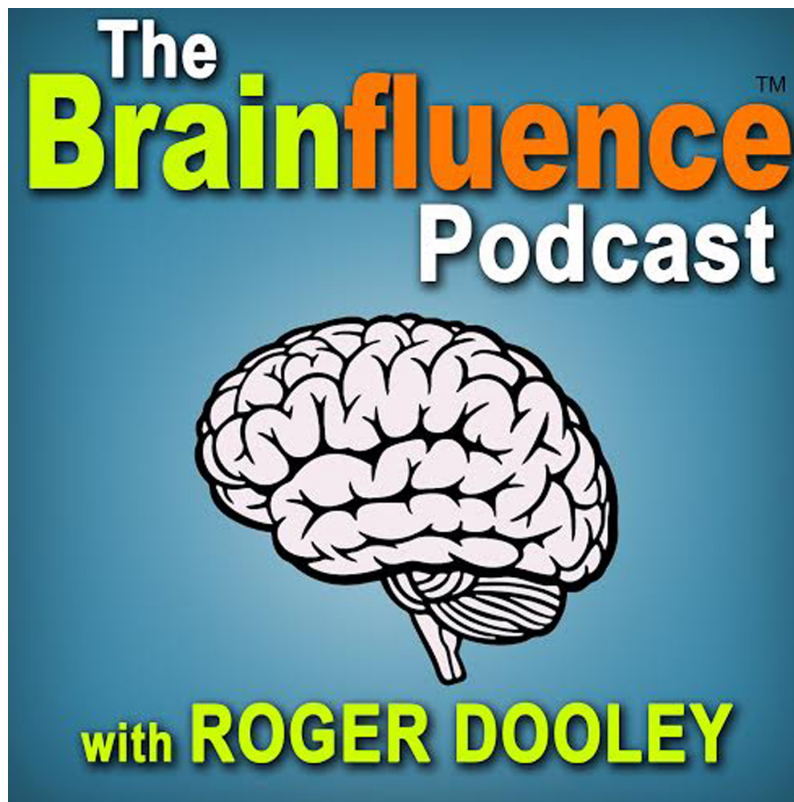


**The Jackass Whisperer with Scott Stratten**

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/scott-stratten-jackass>



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**Roger Dooley**

**The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley**

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Welcome to Brainfluence, where author and international keynote speaker Roger Dooley has weekly conversations with thought leaders and world class experts. Every episode shows you how to improve your business with advice based on science or data.

Roger's new book, *Friction*, is published by McGraw Hill and is now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookstores everywhere. Dr Robert Cialdini described the book as, "Blinding insight," and Nobel winner Dr. Richard Claimer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

To learn more, go to [RogerDooley.com/Friction](https://www.RogerDooley.com/Friction), or just visit the book seller of your choice.

Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence, I'm Roger Dooley. Today's guest is here for the second time and you are in for a fun session. Scott Stratten is the president of UnMarketing. He's written five bestselling business books and was formerly a music industry marketer, national sales training manager, and even a college professor.

Roger Dooley: Today, Scott focuses on speaking at events for companies like Walmart, Pepsi, Adobe, IBM, Microsoft, and a little bit different than some, Cirque du Soleil. Scott has always had an interesting perspective. Last time on the show we discussed his book, QR Codes Kill Kittens, in how marketers are so eager to jump on the latest trend that they produce work that is not only a waste of money, but often hilarious.

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Roger Dooley: Scott's new book is The Jackass Whisperer: How to deal with the worst people at work, at home and online — even when the Jackass is you. Welcome back to the show, Scott.

Scott Stratten: We only pick the doozies when we come on this show, don't we?

Roger Dooley: That's right, that's right. You know what those like conventional business advice ones were, just say here are the five marketing mistakes to avoid. This is actually great because I recall you, the phrase The Jackass Whisperer coming up, I think maybe at a long ago Pubcon and a speech you are doing there.

Roger Dooley: That was a time when perhaps some of our international folks might or might not be familiar with, but there was a book out called The Horse Whisperer about a character who had a unique ability to communicate with horses. There was a movie too by that name, and after that, people were coming up with all these whispers. There was a Dog Whisperer, a CEO Whisperer and so on, but I'm pretty sure you can take credit for Jackass Whisperer, Scott. Would that be true?

Scott Stratten: I think so, yes. If you Google it, it's actually its own jackass story that if you Google the term, it's credited to one of two people, either me or Brené Brown. Brené Brown heard me say it at an event, and saw a tweet, and shared it, and then put it in her book, Daring Greatly, which went on to sell a trillion or so copies. She's wonderful, she's a great support of jackass whispering.

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Scott Stratten: It's funny because people will hear her say it on stage and she's quoting me, and they'll hear her say it and go, "Okay, it's her quote now." She spent the better part of 2011, I think, correcting people that it was my quote. Yes, it's a fun little thing.

Roger Dooley: Yes. It sucks when somebody has better SEO than you do, you know.

Scott Stratten: I'll take it though. It's been fun. It's actually kind of a business discussion about it is the pursuit of do you trademark something, the copyright side of things. We never trademarked the word, anything to do with UnMarketing or UnBranding or UnSelling.

Scott Stratten: I'm all about the brand of stuff, and we never did anything with Jackass Whisperer itself even though we put it on products and merchandise. If you go out and search it to buy it, it's all over the place. A bunch of different companies put it on sheet, T-shirts, and posters, and illustrations, and we just didn't want to be in the business of trademark enforcement.

Roger Dooley: Well, yes, particularly it would be I think rather ironic to trademark on marketing. You know what I mean?

Scott Stratten: That's exactly the reason right there, it doesn't make any sense. Yes.

Roger Dooley: Yes. You've got to practice what you preach.

Scott Stratten: Exactly.

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Roger Dooley: At the same time, it does create some issues because I know that's been abused from time to time by others I think.

Scott Stratten: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Roger Dooley: Anyway, before we get into your new book, I'm curious, you've always had some great insight into the world of digital marketing. QR codes never did take off in this country, I can say it did pretty well in China and other places. But you know, here, the cat population has actually soared because of that. I haven't seen you speak lately, Scott, but would I be right in assuming that you are still getting laughs from pointing out goofy things marketers do?

Scott Stratten: Yes. Well it's been a funny kind of growth of the brand and the topics. The funny thing is QR Codes Killed Kittens itself like the title, and the phrase, and the book was the QR codes were like the epitome to me of digital marketing gone wrong, which is we roll something out that the industry or the consumer doesn't even understand because it looks cool, or we want to be able to show that we're using technology.

Scott Stratten: If people started using QR codes now, like 2019, 2020, we started using them now, it's a different ballgame because now we're... I talked about this I think even on your show, I talked about if the camera natively recognized it, like the default camera on an iPhone or an Android, recognize there was a QR code in the field of vision and just said, "Click here", it's done, then it's a totally different discussion. That book doesn't come out, that phrase doesn't happen, and the problem is we've just

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kind of gone so far the wrong way that I don't really see it recovering.

Roger Dooley: Yes, maybe. I mean it might spread because in China they're ubiquitous, and of course now, today, phones do what you described. My Android phone, I can just fire up the camera and point it at a code, and it will recognize it and give me a link to click. At which it did not do, back in those days, you had to install a special app and open up the app and so on. Of course, on the marketers side, they were doing crazy things like putting QR codes on airplane banners.

Roger Dooley: You could never see you in your camera, of course, and just demonstrating total lack of understanding.

Scott Stratten: Yes.

Roger Dooley: Today it wouldn't surprise me if they became a little bit more common. In fact, I do see them now and again, not too often, but in fairly practical ways where maybe you've been given a flyer or something that you can then, if you want to look it up on your phone, you can scan the code. Maybe it'll just sort of ease its way into reality.

Scott Stratten: I've always said this, even at the height of my QR code rant, I always love the technology. I think it's brilliant. I love the fact that it just came up on a football game, like a home shopping network commercial had a QR code on it. It's funny because branding is a funny thing. You know how many times people sent that to me? This is last weekend, and it had a QR code, and people just rush to send it to me. I'm like, "I'm not the defender or the enemy of QR codes."

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Scott Stratten: I disliked digital and technology when it works properly and the consumer makes sense to them, and that's where I just want logic and reason using this stuff, then I am leading the charge and wanting it to work well. Every boarding pass I have is a QR code. I get it, but we just, we were forcing it down the throats of consumers that it's something they didn't want or didn't ask for at the time because we didn't have the functionality.

Roger Dooley: Are there any mistakes today that you see that are analogous to that? Something that marketers are either don't understand or just too far ahead of the market?

Scott Stratten: I was about to say it as a joke, nope, we're all good now. I couldn't even say it, I wouldn't be able to say it with a straight face. It's almost like the same old thing on just different platforms at this point. But now we've gotten to this point in this social media and the digital world that we are now like, "Okay, so we're multiple platforms, they're all kind of running the same kind of core way of doing it."

Scott Stratten: LinkedIn now has content, and sharing, and updates. Facebook has that, and then we got Instagram, and then we got Snapchat, we got some WhatsApp, we got some TikTok. We have marketers sticking their nose where it really doesn't make sense to stick it. It's the same idea, focus still hasn't become too much of a priority in the things I have heard what's going on, this following and building a platform, building an audience. It's amazing to see that we're still making those same mistakes where we're just pushing messages, we're pushing commercials and we're not necessarily engaging with the customers or the people

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Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Just sort of the shiny object syndrome where, "Ooh, it's new, it's cool. Let's, we've got to be there. We've got to be the first ones there."

Scott Stratten: We have this battle of brands trying to invade platforms, and then we had the flip side. We have like the reverse Trojan horse that these sites do which is like as an example, it can be Facebook saying, "Bring us your brands, you're tired fans, your customers and, and we will take care of them, and we will nurture them." Everybody's like, "Let's move everybody there", and then Facebook turns around and says, "Thank you for all your customers, now we're going to flip it and charge you for everything. And we're gonna, we're gonna take on what you can." Put too much text in an ad, you can't do this, and they lock it down.

Scott Stratten: Google's like, "Bring us your SEO and we'll rank you better", and then they're like, "Aha, just kidding. We're gonna just take the content from your site now, show it on the Google search results so I don't even have to click on your page." We have this kind of crazy reverse Trojan horse I'm seeing now.

Scott Stratten: Amazon is like, "Sell, sell your products on our site and, and we will take care of all the headache." Then Duracell and Energizer show up and they're like, "Nice, we're gonna move a lot of batteries", and Amazon comes back and says, "So we took the research and people love buying batteries. So we decided to take all of your customer data, and we're now going to sell our own batteries. And we're gonna go to the same kind of factories, and get them made, and we're gonna do it, and we're gonna undercut you."

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Scott Stratten: It's this dawn of something that is like the great heist of fans, of followers and of customers that it still comes back to the same thing that we talked about 10 years ago at a Pubcon, that we've talked about 15 years ago at events, is you need to own your property, you need to own your list, you need to own a following because other than that, you're at the mercy of all these places.

Roger Dooley: Totally. I just had a conversation with a community management and billing expert, and really pretty much the same message. Yes, you can build a community on Facebook or LinkedIn, but you're really at their mercy. Right now there are some pretty good thriving communities on LinkedIn that we're both part of, and Facebook is the primary one, but on LinkedIn as well.

Roger Dooley: There's always that danger though if you're trying to do it as a brand or as something that you really hope to last you into the future that they could change the rules again, and they certainly shown themselves willing to do that. So if you can own your property, your community, that's certainly the way to go.

Scott Stratten: That's it. I still think, and I've always thought, and it has never changed since 1995 for me is, is the gold is in your email list. It always has been. I really think for the next near future, it always will be that it's still the last kind of bastion of permission marketing. It is one where it is the only thing you need to do, it's the only function that somebody has to decide to read it or delete it.

Scott Stratten: Everything else is based on algorithms. Everything else is based on, we may show it a bit to you, but it'll come and go, and you don't have to decide anything with it. Email

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has still that functionality, and text is like that too, SMS, but please don't ruin that, marketers, please. Please don't do that.

Roger Dooley: They wouldn't overdo it, would they?

Scott Stratten: Oh my goodness. I'm just waiting for that, I'm just waiting for that to fall, man. I'm telling you, it's going to hurt me, but it's that permission-based idea of an email, and the fact that they still have to make a decision based on the message versus everything else. It just comes and goes regardless if you're there.

Roger Dooley: Scott, I think the concept of marketers sending you lots of marketing texts moves us into jackass territory perhaps. We can transition to talking about your new book. Your past books haven't always been conventional in format. How would you describe The Jackass Whisperer?

Scott Stratten: It's certainly written like the previous five where it's kind of easy to consume, it's short chunks, and there's 125 jackasses named in the book, and like types of jackasses split into eight sections from at work, in transit. That can be on a plane, or in your car, or on a train, at the gym, at the mall, in the wild. Even kids have their own section.

Scott Stratten: It's real easy to digest. Each one has the description of the jackass, then there's a suggested jackass reaction and a suggested whisper reaction, and you decide whether you want to continue the jackassery that you're facing, or to end it for you because it's nothing to do with the other person.

Scott Stratten: That's where it really gets into that. People don't realize that the book is actually about empathy. The book is that

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we're realizing if we're always running into jackasses every single day of our lives, maybe, I'm not saying, I'm just saying maybe, we may be the jackass as well, because it's all of us.

Scott Stratten: Alison and I are the two, the king and queen of jackassery. It's the only way we could put this book out is we know it best, because we're the ones doing it and it's really about do you want to change your day? This isn't about the worst people on the planet. This isn't the horrible humans. This is the purveyors of pet peeves, this is the everyday annoyances.

Scott Stratten: I think if we expend our energy just dealing with all these small, the jackassery in the day, we don't have the energy or the time to take on the real issues and the real problems. This is just a cognitive thing, a little mind shift to change that around.

Roger Dooley: Yes. As I was reading through them, I found that more often than not, I was more tempted by the jackass responses which typically involve either some kind of intervention, or at least a snarky comment that the jackass would over here as opposed to the whisper response that was really based in empathy than understanding that the person that you consider to be engaged in this unacceptable behavior may have a good reason for doing so, and maybe it's not all that bad. Does my preference for the first one make me a bad person or maybe just a situational jackass?

Scott Stratten: It just makes you like me, because we also prefer it, because we wrote them, because that's what we do. I just think that part of it is understanding that it's almost in a

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self-depreciating way to say, can we recognize ourselves in this. This is why we put on the inside cover a 125 check boxes, and you just check off which jackass you are, which jackasses you are. Then in the back cover you have a scoring system of where you rank on the hierarchy of jackassery.

Scott Stratten: I'll give you a great example for this and you might be part of the same... cut from the same cloth as I am with this. People don't know that English is my second language, and sarcasm is my first language, and it is exactly how I react to everything. I have built a good sized following in a brand based on my sarcasm.

Scott Stratten: What you don't realize is when... why I do the sarcasm it's because I'm going for the joke. I'm always been the class clown, it was written in my report card back in grade school, and I've made a living from it. The problem is when you're going for the laugh, it all depends on the intent of that laugh, and sarcasm is not usually a healthy laugh when it's pointed.

Scott Stratten: As an example, Alison and I are married, combined we have five kids. Really, she writes, she's the writer, I'm the one on stage and it's just the best of both worlds. We collaborate on everything. When we just first got together, I set a sarcastic comment, it was teasing her. That's how you do relationships. She turned to me and said, "I don't like to be teased", and that ended it.

Scott Stratten: I stopped that day of making her a butt of a joke, or a tease, or sarcasm, and it realizes it leaves a lot more time to have good conversations. And to compliment her, to tell her every day I love her and she looks beautiful. That

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was a big part because I think sarcasm is what causes erosion in relationships both at work and at home.

Roger Dooley: Yes, I can see that. I think if sarcasm is the default, then sometimes it can go too far. I think we've probably all seen that person who's normally pretty funny who just is in a situation and throws out a line that ends up falling flat or being a little bit too much simply because they're so used to that automatic response that it doesn't always work, even if most of the time they're pretty amusing.

Scott Stratten: It's interesting in the workplace too. When you have layers, so when you have like power hierarchies in workplaces, when you are saying something sarcastic or you're trying to be funny, and you are a level above the people you're saying it to, a lot of times they might be laughing because it's their job and you're not actually being that funny.

Scott Stratten: If your leadership skillset is sarcasm, it's another problem too because your subordinates are never going to tell you that that doesn't help them, or that's not funny, or it doesn't create a good work environment. Sarcasm can lead to fairly toxic work environments too because you're allowing permission, because sarcasm and joking is also subjective, and so where's the line for stuff? When you're the leader at a workplace, it causes an issue.

Roger Dooley: Definitely. I think it's that power relationship. I mean I've been in workplaces where the boss would make teasing comments even like about somebody's appearance. Somebody was short, tell a short joke every now and then. If you were with a couple of your buddies having a

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beer, that might work, but in the workplace where there's that power dynamic, I mean it really, it can be very toxic.

Scott Stratten: It's an issue. You take it out of the workplace as well, it can be to do with family. Physical appearance is a good one because it's a really mean thing to do. Even on a teasing aspect of stuff, it always has some truth whether it's the sender of the tease or the receiver of it. Even if your intent isn't malicious, it's received always differently than what we intend something to.

Scott Stratten: As an example, celebrities are always a fair target. Go on Twitter when an award show is on, and people would be ripping stuff or what they wore, what they dress. They're saying snarky, snide comments about something, and our kids are around and they hear that, and they hear that and they absorb that, and that becomes either okay for them to do themselves, or becomes, "Oh, so my appearance is an issue", and it's questioning it. It's a huge, huge snowball.

Scott Stratten: When it comes down to sarcasm itself, here's the thing, Alison and I have not stopped being sarcastic. Oh my goodness, no. I don't think we have a lot of words in general on this planet if it wasn't for sarcasm, but we do it with each other. We are sarcastic situationally together. When we're watching Brooklyn Nine-Nine at night in bed and the kids are all in bed, and we'd say something snarky or funny about a situation in the show or something like that. We make each other laugh that way.

Scott Stratten: I'm not asking people to stop being sarcastic or stop being "funny", let's just look at the situations that we do it in and where is it pointed. I think that our subordinates at work or

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our partners in personal life should feel better when we're around than when we're away.

Roger Dooley: Right. Well, this has taken a far more serious turn. Before we get too far down the serious path, Scott, I think we ought to change gears a little bit. If you look at some examples, chapter 19 is about the jackass who does not need headphones and listens to music, podcasts or whatever at full volume in the presence of others. I'm wondering what my options are, but before you answer, we cater to a smart audience here, but it's possible that maybe one or two of our listeners are right now listening at full volume with others around. We don't want to say anything that'll incite violence against them. Anyway, given that, what should I do in that situation?

Scott Stratten: If you're listening to this episode out loud right now and other people can hear it, you have 10 seconds to do something about it. When you said that type of jackass, the hair at the back of my neck went up. It's already... I travel a lot, and I'm on a lot of airplanes, I'm in a lot of hotels, and so the volume on without headphones in people, it's just one of those things that adds to the noise of your day. Either it's a FaceTime in an airport gate area, and they're just loud, or they're watching a video.

Scott Stratten: At the end of the day, here's the thing, I can't control other people, you can't control other people. What can I do? I can look at a couple of things. One, I'm looking at it in a jackass way which is, have you never heard of headphones? There's a sarcasm, right? The sarcastic angle is this, or you throw them a pair of air airplane headphones you found on a plane once or something.

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Roger Dooley: That's a good one. Always keep a pair of those handy for those situations.

Scott Stratten: Right. But the flip side of it is, especially a FaceTime, you never know. FaceTime has created a whole new world for us, or something like FaceTime, like Skype or like a video chat. I realize my FaceTime at home when I dial home with the kids and I talk to them at night, that's my lifeline.

Scott Stratten: I'm on the road 150 days a year. For them to be able to... I get to see them and talk to them is great. So maybe this person is FaceTiming with somebody, they didn't have headphones, they couldn't find headphones or whatever it is, and they're just focused on the moment and they're trying to be present with that FaceTime. At the end of the day, you know what I can do about it? I can put my headphones on. I can put my headphones on.

Scott Stratten: I have a Spotify mix, you can actually see it. If you search it, it's called relaxed jackass, and it's my quiet mix. All it is is about 60, 65 songs that are relaxing, that are quiet. It takes me out of the moment, and I even get a look. When people do that with audio, you asked the kids or Alison, I have this look on my face, my head perks up a bit. They just look at me and go, "Headphones." I'm like, "Oh yeah, sorry", and then I put them back on. It takes me away from trying to deal with it because it's not my jackass, not my circus type of thing.

Roger Dooley: You talked about the gym too. I was thinking, I ran to that last situation where somebody was at the gym who was in the locker room who was playing music loudly. I did not say anything. I figured it, as you say, it probably wouldn't change behaviors. Perhaps suggest that their earbuds

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weren't working, and if they said, "Well, I'm not using ear buds", I say, "Oh, that explains it."

Scott Stratten: The old passive-aggressive move.

Roger Dooley: Yes, passive aggressive there. Anyway, so let's talk about some business jackasses or potential jackass situation. What about that person who really needs a reply right now and keeps texting you asking the same thing different ways.

Scott Stratten: It's one of those things where I think we've all dealt with it, the overeager person. It goes so much deeper usually than the surface, and that's what we don't realize. It's back to intent. We give people the benefit of the intent only sometimes, and I want to be able for us to give it to everybody, which is when somebody is following up a little too much, a little too quickly, in my head I try to say, okay, so are they feeling panicked? Is there a bigger issue?

Scott Stratten: When my assistant, Karen, when she bugs me about something, I get really annoyed. She'll send a text and an email about something and I'll be like, "Come on." I'm the boss, and then I realized, you know why she does this? Because I have a habit of not answering her, but that's not in my head, my head is like, "I run the show here, I'll answer when I feel like it", but her only goal is to make the business run smoothly.

Roger Dooley: Right. Faxing her back to add another modality would not be the correct answer.

Scott Stratten: Although I would commend it, do the fax reply to somebody. It's also how we word it, because I can write

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back to her and say, "I told you, either email or text me, but don't do both", but at the end of the day, that's not helpful. This person is trying to do their job, and I would write back to somebody and say, "It's hard for me to focus on multiple channels and I'm already having, I already have trouble focusing as it is. Can we stick..." At least have a discussion.

Scott Stratten: Because then what happens is somebody else will come back and say, "Oh, the reason I did this was this." If I'm really in a bad mood I'll just write back and say, "Do you want me to reply on email or this text?" Do you know what I mean? I'm not perfect, I am an ongoing daily project to be The Jackass Whisperer. It has changed things, it has changed things for everything for me if you just have those little small cognitive things.

Scott Stratten: In business and in digital, the funny thing is the origin story of Jackass Whisper was because of a tweet in 2000, I think it was 10, 2009, 2010, when I was at the height of my Twitter dominance. Somebody randomly in Toronto, I just live outside of Toronto, and they sent a tweet said, "I just watched a five-minute video of UnMarketing", which is my Twitter handle, "of UnMarketing speaking video and I didn't shoot myself in the face. Somebody owes me a cookie."

Scott Stratten: I'm like, "What?" I'm like, "Whoa, dude." I wrote back, I said, "Man, why, why the hate?" He wrote back, "It's not hate, it's just facts, deal with it. This is before deal with it was a thing. I was so taken aback by it that a bunch of people sent me private, some DMs on Twitter and said, "You know, you should win him over, you should kill him

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with kindness." I wrote back and I said, "My job isn't to rehabilitate jerks online. I'm not The jackass whisperer."

Scott Stratten: Then a couple of days later, because I waited, because I'm sometimes smart. I waited a few days and I just wrote it, "Ignore your haters, you're not the jackass whisperer", and it blew up, and it went nuts. We had socks made, stickers made, shirts made. In the past 10 years I've been keeping a running list, this is the best part.

Scott Stratten: Alison and I both have a running list. Every time somebody gets on our nerves, I'm just looking at them like, "You're going on the list." That's how the book came out, it was just a running list over 10 years.

Roger Dooley: It's too bad, there's only 125 of them. A few weeks ago I had John Jansen of Duct Tape Marketing, and he did a book of daily meditations for entrepreneurs, so 365 of them. If you just could keep this clutch and going a little bit longer, you could have a book of daily jackass meditations.

Scott Stratten: I think you should team it up with John's book. He's got the good meditations, and we've got the, when somebody doesn't let you into their lane on the highway, here's what you do. It's like a smooth, smooth jazz in the background for us, but it's all the jackasses. It's been a fun run with it.

Roger Dooley: Yes. My solution for that is drive a Hummer.

Scott Stratten: Bingo.

Roger Dooley: They let you in.

Scott Stratten: Large tank.

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## **The Jackass Whisperer with Scott Stratten**

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Roger Dooley: One minor annoyance that you describe is the person who has a long signature in their email that lists like everything they've ever done and so on, or those lengthy legal disclaimers. I don't know, has anybody ever tested one of those disclaimers in court?

Scott Stratten: I researched it, no. Nobody.

Roger Dooley: Yes, I believe it. It's like, "Well, legal says we have to do this", but totally useless I'm sure. I think those are pretty easy to ignore as you point out, the whisper response. This isn't costing you more to process these emails, just don't pay any attention to it. I love the concept of changing the wording in that legal disclaimer to include something goofy about the recipient and see if they ever notice when it comes back to them.

Scott Stratten: I love it. Sometimes you just need to release a little steam yourself and go back and change their confidentiality disclaimer just a bit. Brad really loves alligators, like something in there that just throws it right off. They'll probably never notice, but you'll know.

Roger Dooley: I thought about crafting my own disclaimer at the bottom that included one or two little Easter eggs like that, see how many hundreds or thousands of email I could send out before somebody noticed and said, "Hey, you know that disclaimer of yours? Somebody got to it."

Scott Stratten: I love it. I love it. Go, go forth and do it.

Roger Dooley: Scott, we're past the Christmas shopping rush now, but what kind of jackass behavior might we encounter in stores?

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Scott Stratten: That is the, almost like the epitome of jackassery. You've got malls, and then you've got crowds, and you have time crunches, and it's something that's a sight to behold from myself, a former retail worker, and it's something that... It's like a snow globe, if I will, just enclosed panic of people running around trying to find items they should have got probably weeks ago.

Scott Stratten: Here's the thing how I handle this. We were just at a mall yesterday during the run of of craziness. I realize that one of the people that take... I think it's bad, imagine how the retail workers feel, and it's always the frontline that takes the brunt of stuff. It's the frontline that is the one that helps increase the bottom line, yet they're the ones usually treated the worst by both the company and the customers.

Scott Stratten: What I've learned I should do when I'm feeling a little bit agitated, and by a little bit I mean a lot agitated when I'm walking around a mall is when I'm in a store and somebody comes up and says, "Can I help you?", or I'm cashing out and look frustrated, or I'm frustrated, I look at their name tag. I just focus for a second on their name tag.

Scott Stratten: In my mind, not out loud, but in my mind I read out their name. I read on my head the name Vanessa, and I realize that Vanessa is a human, and they're an individual, and that they're not deserving of the anger that I have inside me about whatever store policy they have that they did not write, nor do they have any power over, and I start looking for the good.

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Scott Stratten: I start looking for the whisperers, the good people in the situations versus the bad ones because you'll find either when you go looking for it. The biggest part about the mall is a little planning ahead, a little bit of empathy, and a whole lot of keeping your head on a swivel when people are packed and running around too much.

Roger Dooley: Yes, probably good advice for any kind of customer service situation. I've been bugged lately by businesses that subject you to some really annoying customer service interaction. I had one with my internet service provider which probably right there tells you how good the service is going to be since they are the lowest ranked companies for customer service. It's certainly in the States, probably not too different in Canada.

Roger Dooley: After subjecting you to this ridiculous procedure, and extra work, and everything just to find out some a small piece of information they should be able to get online with no effort at all, then they don't ask you about their service, they ask you to rate the person that you dealt with. Like, "Okay, now that we've subjected you all this garbage, now we're gonna throw the rep under the bus and see what you really think of a her or him." It is really important not to judge the person, find some other way of getting back that company.

Scott Stratten: That's huge, but it's huge part to do that, to be able to say. You realize that your anger is being directed and diverted at the wrong people and the wrong person. Sometimes also your anger isn't necessarily what you're getting mad at because at the end of our day, when you're usually going shopping, it's has been a buildup of

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jackassery all day, and the last person is usually that sets it off.

Roger Dooley: Right. I think of the airline people too, the poor gate agents and other agents trying to help customers whose planes are screwed up because of weather. Yes, you're going to miss that meeting, or you're not going to be home in time for Thanksgiving dinner or something and you're really, really upset. It is not that person's fault, they're trying to help you. It's difficult.

Roger Dooley: Hey, one last question. If you and Alison gone through that checklist, and I'm curious as to how you scored if so.

Scott Stratten: She scored higher than I did, and she wrote it, and she did the scoring. I think she scored 45 and I scored 36. The whole mall category, she just had check boxes for it because it's dedicated to her. She got specific stuff about retail workers, and about how they are on based on commission, and they tell her you look good in something. She is a self-proclaimed bigger jackass than I, but I would argue that.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well, on that note, let me remind our listeners that today we are speaking with Scott Stratten, the original unmarketer and author of the new guide to living your best life, *The Jackass Whisperer: How to deal with the worst people at work, at home and online — even when the Jackass is you.* Scott, how can people find you in your ideas?

Scott Stratten: This book is wherever fine books are sold. You can check it out at [jackasswhisperer.com](http://jackasswhisperer.com). You can find Alison and I, UnMarketing on a lot of the platforms, and then Instagram

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is UnMarketing for me, and then Alison is under Alison Robin.

Roger Dooley: Okay. We will link those places, to the book and to any other resources we spoke about on the show notes page [rogerdooley.com/podcast](http://rogerdooley.com/podcast). We will have a transcript of our conversation there too. It's always a pleasure, Scott, thanks for being on the show.

Scott Stratten: Thanks for having me again.

Thank you for tuning into this episode of Brainfluence. To find more episodes like this one, and to access all of Roger's online writing and resources, the best starting point is [RogerDooley.com](http://RogerDooley.com).

And remember, Roger's new book, *Friction*, is now available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and book sellers everywhere. Bestselling author Dan Pink calls it, "An important read," and Wharton Professor Dr. Joana Berger said, "You'll understand Friction's power and how to harness it."

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